[97:45] Chapter 1

The Tapirapé River

000 [Ed., pp. 45-47 and most of p. 49 are omitted; Map 2 appears on p. 48 in the original text.]

[97:49] Topography of the Surrounding Area

133 137 The Tapirapé River flows through a vast savanna region which is separated from it, along most of its course, by a strip of forest quite irregular in width. This savanna, as a rule, extends [97:50] over such flat ground that the horizon would be very wide if it were not for the trees, two or three meters high, which stand a few paces from each other and make up what is called the campo cerrado [Tr., savanna with scattered scrub forest]. It is true that sometimes the distance between the trees increases, and they become better developed and a few meters higher. There are also large empty areas, that is to say, grassland completely free of arboreal growth. Sometimes these stretches are crossed by a narrow forest strip of high trees concealing a small stream, or they are broken by swampy groves of muriti palms. This does not prevent large areas of empty grassland from remaining flooded during the dry season, when their black soil [134] is often so slippery that it well deserves the name of "soap" which I gave these places of involuntary gymnastics as I skated over them.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that most of the grasslands surrounding the Tapirapé River dry out at that time of year to such a point that they become easily inflammable. On June 15, 1935, while I was in Tampíitana [later referred to as Tampiitaua], the village of the Tapirapé Indians, I saw pillars of smoke rising to the north, southwest, and east, and this brought to my attention the existence of grasslands and people in those parts. 134 The soil of the dry grasslands can be [491] so hard that the Indians massage their feet and legs after having walked several hours over it. Only rarely, however, is this soil rocky. I found it covered with small, round, brownish-red stones in only a few restricted areas, especially in small stretches of campo cerrado close to the forest inhabited by the Tapirapé.

[Text continues on p. 6]

137 241 The savanna of the hinterland beyond the left bank of the river is bounded on the north by this huge forest, in which many generations of Tapirapé Indians have found enough virgin growth to prepare annually new plots that provide them with an abundance of bananas, maize, peanuts, gourds, beans, manioc, yams, sweet potatoes, peppers, tobacco, and cotton. This forest, aside from being flooded extensively even in the dry season, contains small streams flowing on wide beds of clear sand, which offer the Indians cool, limpid water for drinking and bathing, and abundant fish, large and small, that play an important part in their diet.

133 312 226

The only man-made trails that we know of so far in the vicinity of the Tapirapé River are the more or less deeply marked footpaths of the Tapirapé Indians. On the savanna, they are about 20 centimeters wide and follow the sinuous line involuntarily produced by human beings when they walk on flat ground. [97:51] We can verify this sinuosity, for example, on a long beach, when we attempt to reach a certain point directly and later look at the trail left by our feet. We notice that it meanders and thus differs from all animal tracks, those of the jaguar or water cavy as well as those of birds, which always run in a straight line unless they curve out deliberately.

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To give an idea of a specific part of the river environs at a specific time of year, I shall now describe my land journey toward the north, from Porto Salvação to Tampũtána. I left on June 19, 1935, at 3:30 in the afternoon, carrying on my back the requisite sleeping and eating equipment. I walked at the rapid pace used by the local frontiersmen on long hikes, making about five kilometers an hour on flat, unobstructed ground. I went through dry grassland with a scattering of medium-sized trees which sometimes stood dozens of meters apart. After a walk of nearly three hours, I reached Lake Tucunaré, so called because of its abundant fish of the same name which attract the Tapirapé Indians to the place every year. At the time of my passage, Lake Tucunaré was a slow and deep brook which I had to cross up to my waist in water. They say that it connects with the Tapirapé River during the rainy season. It is surrounded by trees, and the water is full of them. After wading through it, I reached a place on the shore where those Indians often set up their sleeping hammocks and where I spent the night. There were quite a few mosquitoes. The chief plague of the day, however, in spite of my deliberately late start, was the heat.

114 133 [137] [103] [136] [136] [132]

I left at 6:30 the following morning. Everything was wet with dew. I skated over a stretch of black earth, damp and slippery ("soap"). I saw jaguar tracks. At eight o'clock, I reached a flooded forest strip which I had to ford. The same thing happened after walking another ten minutes. At ten o'clock I reached a traditional Tapirapé resting place located in a small patch of forest which contains fresh water. I rested there until four in the afternoon, and then set out again and waded through a swampy area. At 5:30 I reached dry scrub land where I was able to set up camp for the night. Before going to sleep, I heard frequent jaguar calls.

When I awoke on the twenty-first my clothes were soaked through with dew. I set out at six o'clock. Half an hour later, I was lost in a large and swampy muriti grove. At seven o'clock I reached dry scrub land, and at 9:15 the great forest. During the first 15 minutes of walking, the ground of the forest was more or less dry, but after that it became completely flooded. I walked for an hour and a half in water, which flowed in several places. At 11:30 [97:52] I found manioc in a brook. I then crossed four gardens separated from each other by strips of forest. At a quarter before one, I met four youths of the Tapirapé tribe, and half an hour later, still walking through the immense forest, I spotted in its midst the village of those Indians.

When I returned from the village to Porto Salvação on August 5 of the same year, I made the whole trip in a single day. I left at dawn with a Tapirapé youth. Although these Indians, as a rule, walk a little more slowly than the local Brazilian frontiersmen, their pace is still quite rapid and very even so that they proceed at the same speed through forest and grassland, and since they hardly stop to rest in the daytime, they may walk 40 or 50 kilometers a day.

On the way back, we took a different course through the forest. The area we had gone through on the way out was still flooded. We walked on ground that was quite dry, making a wide curve to the west. We reached the grassland within two hours. In many areas the Indians had already burned the grass, and our feet and legs were free of that hindering growth which adds so much to the traveler's weariness. Once in a while, a fresh breeze blew upon us. We walked four hours through open grassland and scrub forest, with frequent glimpses of pairs of deer, until we reached the traditional Tapirapé resting place in the small patch of forest containing fresh water. There we found Reverend Kegel

101 relatively close to this confluence, that is to say, to the north of
174 it, there lived such Tupí tribes as the Anambé of the lower Tocantins mentioned by Couto de Magalhães (2, 267) and Ehrenreich (1 and 3, IV), the Manajé of the Araranduba River studied by Nimuendajú (2), and the Urubú cited by Rice and Raimundo Lopes (2).

[98:109] The fact that the "Caatingas" owned many canoes
101 does not rule in any way against their identification with the
501 Tapirapé. The latter, although at present they are not navigators
174 like their neighbors the Karajá [Caraja] or the old-time Tupinambá, still retain the Tupí word for canoe, yana in Tapirapé pronunciation. Furthermore, in 1935, I saw on the Tampiitáua village stream a tree trunk hollowed out in the shape of a dugout. It is true that apparently it had been made just for fun, since it lay with the opening facing downward and was not used as a boat even in play. This, however, does not make it unlikely that the Tapirapé should have owned many traveling canoes in former times.

101 Caatinga, a Tupí word consisting of caá, "bush," and tinga,
174 "white, whitened," may refer to the region inhabited at the time
[137] by the Indians of that name, for it is known that the forests of gnarled, stunted trees that shed nearly all of their leaves during the dry season, forests called catingas or matos sêcos [dry bush], extend to the north of the state of Goiás (cf. Bernardino José de Souza 120-121). In any case, this designation does not rule against the identification of the "Caatingas" Indians with the Tapirapé or any other tribe with a different name. [Ed., the remainder of this page and part of the first paragraph on p. 110 are omitted.]

[98:110] The Tapirapé appear in the eighteenth century as
101 "Tapuyrapé" and "Tapirasse," in the nineteenth century as "Tappiraques" and "Tapirapeques" and in the twentieth century as "Itapirapés," there being even a street by this name in the city of São Paulo (see Alrosa 2, 152). This leads us to assume that the name of the tribe changed over these four centuries in accordance with variations in pronunciation. In any case, I agree with the
101 opinion of Nimuendajú (ibid. [letter of October 12, 1935]) accord-
114 ing to whom it is more probable that the "Pirapêz" of Bento Maciel
174 Parente [cited apud Mendes de Almeida II, 35-37] should be

171 411 25 centimeters wide and 12 centimeters in circumference on the above-mentioned Karajá club which is in my possession. Both specimens are made of heavy wood. [Ed., a paragraph is omitted.]

411 [724] [578] In hand-to-hand fighting, to kill at a short distance, the club is usually preferable to the arrow. The Tapirapé will also grab their clubs when quarreling with a member of their own tribe, but in spite of this menacing gesture the quarrel is usually limited to a string of verbal insults. While in daytime dances the men of 411 535 Tampiitaua held in their hands an arrow or bow, and only exceptionally a club, in the kaó, or great nocturnal group dance, they held clubs and bush knives. These weapons were not used largely to mark time, as was the case with the bow and arrow in the daytime dances. They were displayed to make clear the character of kaó, which, as shown also by the intonation of the accompanying chant and by other elements, is basically a martial one. Furthermore, [721] when equipped with clubs and bush knives, the warriors stood ready every night to repel any dreaded attack by their Kayapó neighbors. As far as hunting is concerned, it must be recalled 224 411 [137] that the density of the forest vegetation and the height of the grass in the savanna frequently ruled against the use of bow and arrow and impelled the Indian to attack from a short distance, that is to say, to use the club. In spite of this, during the march between the village and the river I observed that all the men carried bows and arrows, while they did not all carry clubs. Another specialized function of the Tapirapé club [683] is to kill those people who are regarded as evil sorcerers.

114 411 [439] [171] The Tapirapé spear (yvyra-hâia, "pointed stick," or mina, "spear") may have been imported from the Karajá. There are no references to spears among the ancient Tupinambá or among the upper Xingu tribes. In Montoya's work (2, II), however, we find the terms ibirâhaquâbae, "pointed stick" (haquâ, "point") and my, "spear, prong." I did not see any spears while I was with the [535] Tapirapé, but at Macauba on Bananal Island, Mr. Frederico Kegel showed me one that he had brought back from a previous visit to those Indians, and told me that they used it exclusively in their dances to mark the time, in the same manner as the above-mentioned weapons. 171 411 This spear resembled the Karajá spear (donolí) described by Krause (2, 272-273 and Fig. 126). It was likewise a

533 In any case, the greater part of the animal dances and songs
535 that I witnessed dealt with fish. Only the dance of the chankui,
that is, "little guan," was also performed frequently. A dance
[171] by this name is mentioned by Von den Steinen (2, 313) for the
Auetö and Kamayurá as "original" to these Tupi tribes. Actually,
● [137] those gallinaceans of the Penelope genus, which are easy to catch,
abound in Tapirapé territory, and their tasty meat is not barred
to either sex. It would be possible to build fine hypotheses about
the connection between these facts and the above-mentioned
dance, but I shall abstain.

The predominance of fish dances accords with the importance
226 of fishing. The chief fishing period lasts from June to October.
During these months, the waters are low and clearer, and in many
places it is possible to see all the way down to the bottom. The
[133] small streams gradually dry out, and the fish are compelled to
crowd into certain stretches of the river and into the lakes. The
latter lose their connections with the river, or they are closed off
artificially with dams, observed by Krause (2, 409, Fig. 7, and
267, Plate 29), which consist of stakes connected with crosspieces
and covered with thick foliage.

The areas thus dammed are poisoned with a vine called chimá
in Tapirapé. The Indians pound the water with pieces of this vine,
and call the procedure anchimakí. The water turns a purplish blue.
Only the very small fry are killed, however. Other fish are stunned.
[312] To get drinking water the Indians dig holes in the banks, which
sometimes lie no farther than one meter from the poisoned waters,
but whose contents, filtered through the sand, are harmless to man.
[Ed., a paragraph is omitted.]

[112:60] Another Tapirapé fishing method, which I have already mentioned, is with the bow and arrow. While the large barbed arrow is used exclusively by adult men, the small one with one or several simple wooden points is used by the boys. [Ed., a paragraph is omitted.]

At Tamplitama I saw a fish trap (chekiá) consisting of a cylin-
227 drical, funnel-shaped basket made of cane strips (Photo. 32).
Aside from this, the Indians showed me a strange object, according to them, used to catch the tiniest fish, which is placed in the water, like the trap, in such a way that the current makes it easy for the fish to get in and impossible for it to get out. This object

262 824 the mangaba [Tr., fruit of the mangabeira] is "the best wild fruit" in the Paresi Range and in many other localities of Mato Grosso and the northeastern part of Brazil.

The palm tree called pinaua by the Tapirapé and macaba by my north-Brazilian camarada, with a nut, slightly larger than a cherry, that ripens in October or November. This nut is boiled [252] until the flesh is softened and then rubbed on a strainer lying in a pot, so that the flesh is worked loose from the pit and falls into the pot where it is boiled in water. The end result is reminiscent of walnuts in flavor and is refreshing.

[114:195] The small nut of another tree, the tucuma palm or tucum-açu (Astrocaryun spec., chavana in Tapirapé) is prized for its oil content and is gathered in October.

The Tapirapé like to eat a kind of mushroom they call yvãpá.

243 252 262 824 These Indians cultivate several other plants aside from those mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Maize (Zea mays L., avandxí in Tapirapé) is harvested while still green, hung inside the house to yellow, and then crushed and used to make porridge or cauí. Its Tapirapé name corresponds to abati in Staden (c 2), auati in Léry (120), ubatim in Soares de Sousa (199), auatî in Stradelli (384), and abatí in Montoya (2, I, 357 and II, 10). [Ed., the remainder of the paragraph is omitted.]

244 252 262 824 The seeds of peanuts (Arachis spec., monoví in Tapirapé) are pounded and then added to certain mushes, or else roasted, pounded, and eaten in this way, or roasted and eaten without being subjected to the pestle, or chewed and spit into the pot to ferment and turn into cauí. [Ed., the remainder of p. 195, p. 196, and the first paragraph on p. 197 are omitted.]

262 824 [462] [241] [114:197] In the previous chapter, we mentioned that the Tapirapé women participate in sowing and harvesting only peanuts, maize, and cotton. The observation by the sixteenth century Portuguese author [Gabriel Soares de Sousa] that peanuts are "very hot when eaten excessively," and harmful in certain cases, seems to agree with the idea expressed by the Tapirapé custom that requires father and mother to abstain from this food during their child's [751] first two years so as not to endanger his life.

137 17 244 The peanuts I saw in large quantities among the Tapirapé seem to be a variety of Arachis nambyquarae. This species was found by Kuhlmann in 1919 among the Nambikuara [Nambicuara] of

Pimenta Bueno in the state of Mato Grosso and described by Hoehne (1, 21-22 and Table 190; 2). Like it, the Tapirapé monoví differs from the "common peanut" (Arachis hypogaea) in its size, which is much larger, for its pod may reach seven centimeters in length and its seeds two or three centimeters. According to Hoehne (1, 22), each specimen of Arachis nambyquarae may yield from 50 to 100 pods. Owing to its oil content and abundance, the peanut is of some importance in the Tapirapé diet and also was one of my favorite foods during my stay in Tampiitáua. Krause (2, 241-242, 358-359, and 387) does not mention this plant among the Karajá, Javahé, and Kayapó. A legend I heard in July, 1947, at the Karajá village of Santa Isabel, however, states that a civilizing hero of that tribe, the evening star, taught them to plant peanuts among other things.

Less important than peanuts to the Tapirapé were the large flat beans [Tr., lima beans], slightly larger than those of Europe. Only a few individuals cultivated them, planting them in small quantities. Their Tapirapé name, kumaná, corresponds to comendá in Soares de Sousa (200) and cumandá in Montoya (2, II, 105v) and Stradelli (427). [Ed., a sentence is omitted.] The large Tapirapé bean seems to be a variety of [114:198] Phaseolus lunatus L. and thus to belong to the same species as the beans mentioned by Anchieta (Hoehne 2, 107), Thevet (ibid., 132), and Soares de Sousa (ibid., 211-213). In Tampiitáua, it is boiled in small earthenware pots. Then its green skin is removed. Underneath this skin, the bean is white. I ate it with great pleasure.

Smaller than these beans are the round yellow fruits of a leguminous shrub cultivated by the Tapirapé and called kumaná-yvyraí, "bean-shrub." The neo-Brazilians plant this shrub on Morro da Areia [Tr., a high outcrop hill on the Araguaia River] and other places in the region and give it the name anduzeiro. This name might lead us to assume that the plant belongs to the Cytisus cajanus Lin. species.

The Tapirapé use the fruits of certain Cucurbitaceae as receptacles after removing the flesh, and they use those of another variety in the same family to prepare a highly prized dish with the juice. This juice is heated, and as it begins to boil it is mixed in with pounded raw maize; the boiling mixture is stirred for ten minutes until it thickens. Sometimes they add crushed peanuts. In this

171 writes: "The natives eat these cotton seeds crushed and then
252 boiled into a mush which they call mingau."

At the time of my stays among the Tapirapé, the monoví-
272 kauí was the kind most frequently used and the one I myself took most often. I confess that I liked this drink so much and developed such nostalgia for it that in 1947, when I again met the people whose hammocks had hung beside mine 12 years earlier, the first wish I expressed was this, "Monoví-kauí." It is worth noting
114 that Gabriel Soares de Sousa (203), in describing the use of the
171 peanut among the Tupinambá, does not mention it in connection
272 with the preparation of a liquid. The same applies to squash, incidentally, of which, according to the sixteenth century Portuguese author (ibid., 201), "there are ten or 12 varieties" called gerumús by the Tupinambá of Bahia. The Tapirapé drink made
272 with crumbled squash is called kuruá-kauí. Kuruá may not be
● [137] one of the "varieties" of "gerumús" known in Bahia, but like them, in any case, it belongs to the edible Cucurbitaceae.

The vegetable substances used in preparing the various kinds
[462] of Tapirapé kauí are crumbled or mashed by the women in three different ways, namely, between the hands, in the mortar, and between the teeth. Squash and bananas go between the hands; maize and manioc, the latter previously soaked in water and then sun-dried, go into the mortar; while maize, manioc, peanuts, and cotton seeds are chewed. In the Tapirapé language, amatykú
[192] means "I chew," and andjahák, "I pound." [Ed., the last paragraph on p. 257, p. 258, and the first paragraph on p. 259 are omitted.]

[115:259] The custom of turning a food into mush by chewing
252 it is used by the Tapirapé not only to make cauí, but for the two
[757] following purposes: they chew peanuts to make a paste with which they anoint their bodies when they have been made ill by spoiled
[853] manioc, and they chew certain foods and give the mush to nursing children. These children are also given true cauí. It is to be supposed that observing the already considerable saccharification that takes place in chewing led the Indians to apply this procedure to the preparation of their favorite food. [Ed., the last paragraph on p. 259 and p. 260, which concludes the section in Vol. 115, are omitted.]

272 [116:55] Like the Tupinambá, the Tapirapé have three stages in the preparation of their masticated-fermented drink: (1) they

476 thundering noise, dragging along in its fall its weaker companions.

Every once in a while, a voice was heard behind the trees. One [222] could not see who it was, but the call sounded very close. Immediately, the boys rushed to the spot where the voice came from. Soon they returned with their arms full of bananas. They ran jubilantly toward us and distributed them.

These bananas reached a length of 30 centimeters and a middle [197] [482] circumference of 15 to 20 centimeters. The men brought them in hampers close to the working area, but never came out of the woods into the garden with their load.

The skin of the bananas was black, and their flesh was already 252 brownish and too soft. This is the condition in which the Tapirapé 262 [222] like them best. The fruits are gathered when green and buried at the [171] spot where they grew. The Karajá do the same thing. In the sun-heated ground, the bananas reach the desired state of rottenness more quickly than if they were kept at home. Then, too, they are warm when taken out of the ground, and this endears them further to the Indians.

They are not peeled in order to be eaten. The tough skin is 264 opened a little at one of the tips, the tip is placed between the lips, and the skin slowly emptied by squeezing it with the fingers so that the pulp gradually enters the mouth. Kamairahó ate one banana after another. As for myself, I found them nauseating.

264 [108] The sun was already quite low when we left. We forged 476 ahead at a rapid pace, one behind the other on the narrow trail. We 462 were not far from the village when the path opened onto a small, 574 cleared, triangular space. The women sat in the corners of this space and watched us in silence. The women and girls had split into three groups which tallied with the work groups of their husbands and fathers. They had placed pots of food in the area in the same arrangement. [262] There were banana kãũí, peanut kãũi, cottonseed kãũí, toasted karã, and many other good things. Each group ate only from the pots placed for it at a specific spot. There were smaller quantities for the Tãnãvé, because they were fewer. I was invited from all sides, and since I [123] was very hungry I did not spare the other two groups. Only when I was beginning to be satiated did I put down, with a great show of surprise, the pot of banana soup of the Anantxá from which I had just partaken, and declared that I was a Tãnãvé. This fact, however, did not seem to be of great importance to my hosts.

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Plate 28

1. First tree obstacle in the Tapirapé River.

2. Conquering the waterfall in the Tapirapé River.

3. "Smooth" channel in the upper course of the Tapirapé River.

4. My men on the march to the villages of the Tapirapé.

/Plate 28 faces p. 120./

5: Krause--17 E-5 (1908) 1911 SP9 Caraja
Tapirapé SP9?

5: Krause--18 E-5 (1908) 1911 SP9 Caraja
Tapirapé SP9

Plate 29

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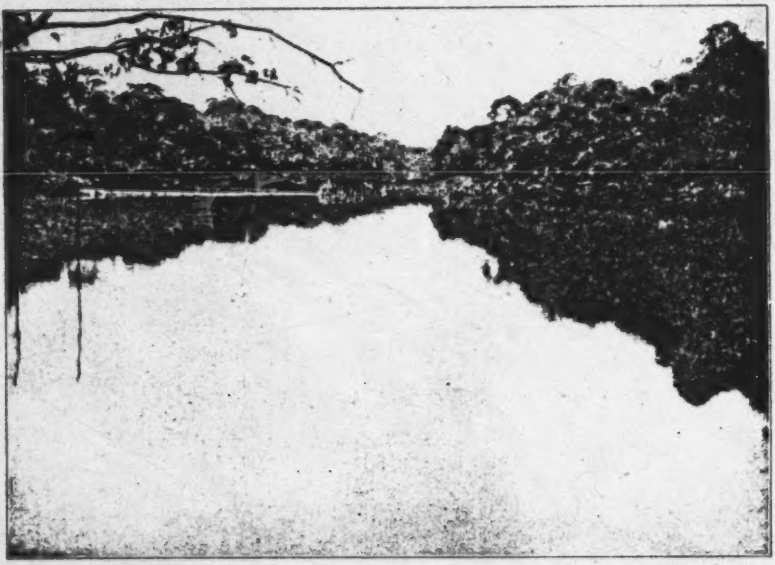

1. Lake blocked off by a fence on the Tapirapé River. View from the end of the lake.

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2. Tapirapé grill in the forest.

/Pl. 29 faces p. 124./

12: Wagley & Galvão E-5 (1939-1940)1948
SP22 Tapirapé SP22

CULTURE

SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

137 The region inhabited by the *Tapirapé* is one of dense tropical forest; yet near the Tapirapé River and parallel to its small tributaries, there are great strips of semiarid savanna country characterized by scrub growth 133 and groups of buriti palms. These plains are flooded during the excessive 132 rains from October to April, and they are arid during the latter part of the dry season (May through September).

241 **Farming.**—The *Tapirapé* make great clearings in the forest for their villages, traveling occasionally to the savanna country for hunting. Their [484] large gardens guarantee them an economy of abundance. They plant several varieties of both sweet and poisonous manioc, four varieties of maize, pumpkins, beans, peppers, cará (*Dioscorea* sp.) and yams, peanuts, squash, several varieties of bananas and beans, cotton, and papaya.

[221] Each year, from June to September, the men clear away the forest for 241 their gardens. Clearing is frequently done individually; frequently also 616 it is done cooperatively by the men's ceremonial moiety groups in a work 476 festival (apačirú). When communally prepared, the large clearings are afterward divided into individual garden lots. Gardens are, thus, gener- [423] ally individual property; now and again, however, a younger man plants together with an older man (his father-in-law) or a close relative. When clearing is done by apačirú, plots are allocated for ceremonial moiety leaders, who use the produce during the harvest feast (kaô) at the end 241 of the rainy season. Vegetation and tree trunks, cut down during the dry season and left to dry, are burned in September. Just after the first rains of October, planting is begun. All crops are planted without order or division within the garden plot, and weeds are never cleared away as [462] the garden grows. All gardening is done by men except the planting and harvesting of peanuts and cotton, which is done entirely by women.

Harvest takes place as the various crops ripen. Maize planted in late October or early November ripens in January; in April and May squash, cará, beans, etc. begin to ripen. Manioc is harvested as needed throughout [422] the year. All food from the gardens is said to belong to the wife once it is brought into the house.

Garden plots are planted for 2 years and then abandoned. The second year only manioc is generally planted in the plot. Yet each year a new plot is cleared from virgin forest and thus each gardener has generally two current garden plots—one newly cleared and a second-year plot planted with manioc. The lack of virgin forest on high ground for garden clear- [361] ings within accessible distance to the village, as well as the fear of the spirits of recent dead, force the *Tapirapé* to move their village site each 4 or 5 years to a new site.

262 Manioc is by far the most important *Tapirapé* crop, as manioc flour is 252 the basis of their diet. Different from other *Tupí* groups, however, the